DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 369 CE 007 104

TITLE International Symposium for Literacy Final Report (Persepolis, Iran, September 3-8, 1975).
PUB DATE Sep 75
NOTE 39p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Conference Reports; Developing Nations; Educational Policy; Global Approach; Group Unity; *Human Development; Illiteracy; *International Education; International Organizations; *Literacy; *World Problems
IDENTIFIERS *International Symposium for Literacy; Iran (Persepolis)

ABSTRACT

The final report of the International Symposium for Literacy, which met in Persepolis, Iran, from September 3-8, 1975, is presented. Participating were 75 individuals from around the world, including representatives from China, Vietnam, and North Korea. Chapter 1 discusses the symposium's origin and sponsoring committee activities while chapter 2, Proceedings of the Symposium, describes the participants, various meetings, officials, and the media. Chapter 3 discusses themes of the symposium: (1) the appraisal and lessons of 10 years of adult literacy work; (2) functionalities of literacy, in view of the need to satisfy the essential needs of man in terms of economic activities, health, culture, and participation in the reform of society; (3) the determination to introduce deep changes in the living conditions of man and in social structures as a sine qua non of literacy undertakings; and (4) innovative role of literacy experiments in the reform of teaching and training systems and their integration into the global educational processes. Chapter 4 discusses the drafting and approval of the Declaration of Persepolis and the Shahinshah of Iran's remarks. The concluding chapter, Annexes, includes a list of participants, the text of the opening and closing speeches, working documents, and the Declaration. (LH)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED123369

Final report

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM for LITERACY

PERSEPOLIS, IRAN
3-8 SEPTEMBER 1975

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CE007104

CONTENTS

		Page
I	Background	3
II	Proceedings of the Symposium	6
III	Discussion of the Themes of the Symposium	8
IV	Drafting and Approval of the Declaration of Persepolis	19
V	Annexes	22
	1) List of Participants	23
	2) Opening Speech by H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi	29
	3) Working Documents	32
	4) Declaration of Persepolis	35
	5) Closing Speech of H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi	39

1. - Background

1.1. - Origin of the Symposium

1.1.0. - The International Symposium for Literacy which met in Persepolis, Iran, from 3 to 8 September 1975, stems from the proposal presented by the Government of Iran at the 18 th Session of the General Conference of Unesco which took place in Paris in October-November 1974. The General Conference approved this project unanimously and it can be found in the following terms in the Programme and Budget for 1975-1976 (document 18 C/5 approved, Paris, February 1975) :

> « 1301 - *Support will be given for the organization and conducting of an international seminar which is envisaged by the Iranian Government on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Teheran « World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy » and which is intended to evaluate the results of a decade of international reflection and action on the subject of literacy teaching, with a view to extending and intensifying adult literacy teaching throughout the world, it being understood that the expenses of the seminar will be defrayed by the Iranian Government.* »

1.2. - Activities of the sponsoring commitee

1.2.0. - After several consultations, the Government of Iran created a Sponsoring Committee in charge of the organization of the Symposium ; this Committee was constituted in the following manner :

President : H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi (Iran) ;

Members : Mr René Maheu (France) ;

H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Baron Castro (El Salvador) ;

Secretary General : H.E. Mr. Majid Rahnema (Iran) ;

Executive Secretary : Mr. Leon Bataille (France).

1.2.1. - The Sponsoring Committee held four sessions between the months of January and September 1975, the first two in Teheran, the third in Paris and the fourth in Shiraz.

1.2.2. - The first session took place on the 14th and 15th January, with the participation of the members of the Sponsoring Committee, excepting that of Mr. Maheu, absent for reasons of health. Several other personalities were invited to participate in the work of this session. The Committee met three times and created an *ad hoc* Working Group. The first meeting of the Committee and that of the Working Group took place on the 14th and were presided over by Mr. Baron Castro, and the other meetings took place on the 15th under the chairmanship of H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi who was replaced by Mr. Baron Castro at the end of the last meeting. The decisions of the Committee dealt with the following aspects of the organization of the Symposium :

1. Title of the meeting : International Symposium for Literacy ;
2. Meeting Place : Persepolis ;
3. Date : 2 to 10 September (reduced later to the period between the 3rd and 8th of that month) ;
4. Working Languages : English, French and Spanish ;
5. Interpretation : simultaneous ;

6. Participants : establishment of the modalities for the sending out of invitations.

1.2.3. - Three months later, i.e. on the 14th and 15th of April, the meetings of the second session of the Sponsoring Committee took place in Teheran with the participation of all its members. Her Imperial Highness was represented at the third meeting by Mr. Majid Rahnema. The Committee took the following decisions :

1. Dates of the Symposium : 3 to 8 September ;
2. Reduction, for several technical reasons, of the number of participants ;
3. Elaboration of the general themes which would be examined by the Symposium.

1.2.4. - These themes were established as follows :

1. Appraisal and lessons of ten years of adult literacy work ;
2. Functionalities of literacy, in view of the need to satisfy the essential needs of man in terms of economic activities, health, culture and participation in the reform of society ;
3. The determination to introduce deep changes in the living conditions of man and in social structures as a *sine qua non* of literacy undertakings, and
4. Innovative role of literacy experiments in the reform of teaching and training systems and their integration into the global educational process.

1.2.5. - In a letter of 29 April 1975 addressed to the Director-General of Unesco, Mr. Ahmadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Mr. Majid Rahnema informed him of the decisions of the Sponsoring Committee taken during the above mentioned session and made several suggestions concerning the participation of Unesco in the preparation of the Symposium.

1.2.6. - The third session of the Sponsoring Committee took place in Paris, at the headquarters of the Permanent Delegation of the Ibero-American Office for Education to Unesco, in presence of the members of the Committee, with the exception of H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi who was represented by Mr. Majid Rahnema.

1.2.7. - During this third session, a number of details concerning the invitations as well as several aspects of the organization of the Symposium were decided upon ; in particular it was agreed not to lay down rules of procedure of the Symposium in advance ; instead, at the very beginning of the Symposium, general principles concerning the proceedings would be decided upon and their implementation would be left to the discretion of the moderators of the discussions.

1.2.8. - Once the details of the organization of the Symposium were established and their implementation initiated, the Sponsoring Committee felt it necessary to publicize the main objectives of the Symposium before an international press conference. This press conference took place in Madrid in association with the Ibero-American Office for Education, whose General Secretary was a member of the Sponsoring Committee in a personal capacity. During this press conference which took place on 19 June, Mr. Leon Bataille described the aims of the Symposium before some twenty correspondents from the press, the radio and television of three continents, and answered questions. This press conference contributed usefully to the success of this endeavour.

1.2.9. - Once preparatory work was completed, the Executive Secretary addressed a note on August 4 to the persons invited to the Symposium. He described in it the different aspects of the organization of the meeting as established by the Sponsoring Committee. He also recalled the four themes submitted for discussion and informed the invitees that the Committee felt « that the success and the future impact of the Symposium depend to a large extent on the essentially free and non-formal nature of the debates on the themes of the Symposium », adding that the Committee felt that the Symposium could carry on its work « without going into the formal adoption of Rules of Procedure ».

1.2.10. - The Sponsoring Committee met for the fourth and last time in Shiraz on 2 September, i.e. on the eve of the opening of the Symposium, under the chairmanship of H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi and in the absence of Mr. René Maheu, whose state of health prevented him from travelling to Iran. In the course of this session, the Committee dealt with the last organizational problems of the Symposium remaining to be solved before its opening.

1.2.11. - With a view to facilitating preparatory work, the Sponsoring Committee established an office for its Executive Secretary in Paris, and engaged an Administrative Secretary. This office functioned from the 1st of April to the 15th of September 1975.

2. - Proceedings of the Symposium

2.1. - Participants

2.1.0. - Seventy-five persons participated in the Symposium, at the invitation of the Sponsoring Committee ; their names and titles can be found on the List of Participants (Annex N° 1 to the present report).

2.1.1. - Although a number of international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, public and private national institutions as well as the Holy See sent representatives to the Symposium, in answer to the invitations received, it was decided that all the participants would take part in the debates in their personal capacity. Consequently, the list of participants has been established by alphabetical order of their names.

2.2. - Plenary meetings

2.2.0. - The proceedings of the Symposium covered ten plenary meetings which took place between 3 and 8 September : in total eight working meetings and the opening and closing ceremonies.

2.2.1. - The Drafting Committee entrusted with the preparation of the text of the Declaration of Persepolis, held long meetings during the afternoons and evenings of the 5th, 6th and 7th September.

2.3. - Opening meeting

2.3.0. - The opening meeting took place on the morning of 3rd September in the main hall of the Darius Hotel, Persepolis, under the chairmanship of H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi and in the presence of high-ranking Iranian officials and personalities and of the participants in the Symposium. Before entering the meeting hall, Her Imperial Highness, her guests and the participants inaugurated the exhibition on literacy in Iran and at the international level, which had been prepared by the Iranian Commission in charge of these questions. This exhibition met with the warmest appreciation of its visitors.

2.3.1 - H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi, speaking in French, made the opening speech, which was interpreted simultaneously in English and Spanish ; then she declared opened the proceedings of the Symposium. The complete text of this speech, which was warmly applauded, is reproduced as Annex N° 2 of the present report.

2.4. - Documents

2.4.0. - The Sponsoring Committee had asked a number of specialists and a few international institutions to prepare « papers » in the framework of the themes of the Symposium ; they were to serve as starting points for discussion and to stimulate further reflexion. Other documents were published during the Symposium and distributed before the first plenary meeting. All these documents are listed in Annex N° 3 of this report.

2.5. - Officials of the Symposium

2.5.0. - The participants in the first plenary meeting unanimously appointed the following officials of the Symposium :

President : H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi (Iran) ;

Moderators : Mr. Abel Prieto Morales (Cuba)

Mr. Paul-Marc Henry (France)

H.E. Ben Mady Cissé (Senegal)

Mr. J.R. Kidd (Canada) ;

Rapporteur general : H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Baron Castro (El Salvador) ;

Secretary General : H.E. Mr. Majid Rahnema (Iran) ;

Executive Secretary : Mr. Leon Bataille (France) ;

Assistant Rapporteur : Mr. Pierre Henquet (France).

2.5.1. - It was decided that the moderators would endeavour to ensure a certain degree of unity to the debates which were to be held under the responsibility of each of them in turn.

2.6. - Information media

2.6.0. - During the Symposium, the mass media of Iran and of other countries followed its work with much interest and informed their respective audiences about it in several languages.

2.6.1. - Spanish Television sent a team of seven, which recorded the work of the Symposium from beginning to end.

3. - Discussion of the themes of the Symposium

3.1. - First theme

Appraisal and lessons of ten years of adult literacy work.

3.1.0. - This first theme was examined in the course of the two sessions held on September 4th, under the chairmanship of Mr. Abel Prieto Morales (Cuba). This discussion was based on background documents prepared for the Symposium by the Unesco Secretariat ; one on the development of literacy work in the world since the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy (Teheran), held in 1965 (SIPA/1), the other on the Global Evaluation of the Experimental World Literacy Programme (SIPA/2).

3.1.1. - The first document was presented by Mr. M. Soler Roca, Head of the Literacy Division, representing the Director-General of Unesco. Mr. Soler Roca emphasized the emergence of new trends in literacy policies and structures, methodology and personnel training, as well as the adoption of approaches that allow greater scope for participation. He also pointed out the possibilities and the limitations of international cooperation in this area.

3.1.2. - Mr. Pierre Henquet (1) introduced the second document, reminding the Symposium of the methodological difficulties inherent in an intercultural evaluation that could not be reduced to a simple critical appreciation, since it constituted a series of structured and relatively systematic analyses designed to measure the impact and effectiveness of pilot functional literacy projects implemented in eleven Third World countries (with the joint participation of the United Nations Development Programme and Unesco), in terms of the objectives assigned them. This evaluation has confirmed the importance of institutional or contextual factors in the organisation of literacy work, with the political will of Member States emerging as a necessary, though not sufficient, condition of success. This evaluation also threw light on the contributions to methodology made by the Experimental Programme ; these are founded on an approach that is both technocratic or vertical (identification of the technostructure's objectives regarding the transformation of society, in order to translate these into educational objectives imposed from above) and democratic or horizontal (based on the participation of the adults concerned in the definition of their problems and needs, leading to the enunciation of negotiated educational objectives.) Twenty five participants took part in the discussion of this theme.

3.1.3. - Mr. J.R. Kidd (Canada), in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Experts responsible for the evaluation of experimental functional literacy projects, briefly set out the recommendations that had just been approved by the Group and communicated to the Director-General of Unesco and to the Administrator of the UNDP.

(1) Head of the Evaluation, Research and Methodology Unit, Literacy Division, Unesco, invited to take part in the Symposium in a personal capacity.

3.1.4. - Several speakers, commenting on the state of literacy work in their respective countries, corroborated the data presented and the trend described in the Document SIPA/1. One speaker stated that comparable calculations made in the University of which he is Head have shown that there will be 900 million illiterates in the world at the end of the century, representing 24 % of the population of the planet at that time ; this confirms, though slightly more pessimistically, Unesco's own projections. Another speaker pointed out that the figures presented were probably over-optimistic, since census returns generally tend to underestimate the degree of illiteracy.

3.1.5. - A number of people held the view that these figures confirmed the overall failure of literacy campaigns undertaken in the course of the past decade. Others replied that this conclusion takes no account of the fact that the persistence of illiteracy is due more to the rate of population growth and to the inefficiency of formal education systems than to the failure of national adult literacy campaigns. One participant pointed out that, according to figures produced by the World Bank, there was reason to fear that the number of school-age children not attending school would reach 375 million in 1985. However desirable primary schooling may be — for if illiteracy really is an evil, surely prevention is preferable to cure — it is incapable, on the basis of presently observed tendencies, of resolving this problem before the end of the century, and even, in the case of several countries, before the first decades of the XXIst Century. Even then, quantitative projections take no account of the qualitative failings of school and of his grave inadequacy in the face of rapid social evolution.

3.1.6. - Other speakers emphasized the fact that quantitative data, however interesting and revealing, should not be allowed to obscure the qualitative aspects of the phenomenon, which are at once more important, more complex and richer in significance.

3.1.7. - A number of participants expressed the view that literacy campaigns had been a patent failure in the non-socialist and non-communist countries of the Third World although, as others pointed out, it must be admitted that there is frequently not enough precise and reliable data for one to be able to formulate objective judgments concerning the factors and conditions governing the success of other countries and the irreversibility of this success. Several participants thought it no accident that illiteracy had been more or less rapidly and totally eradicated in revolutionary countries ; this was seen as proof of the relationship between literacy, the social system and the stage of technological development attained.

3.1.8. - On the basis of this evaluation of the past decade, certain participants expressed concern that literacy work, and particularly functional literacy, might not be capable of being spread to all countries concerned nor in all circumstances. One speaker, moreover, mentioned the growing indifference of public opinion to problems of illiteracy and the lack of enthusiasm among the leaders of several States, who do not seem to realise the importance of adult education in the modern world ; this undoubtedly accounts for the paucity of resources devoted to a form of action that frequently lacks credibility. Several other participants, on the other hand, denied that the failure of literacy campaigns in non-socialist and non-communist countries was inevitable. One of them said

he did not believe in a literacy campaign that was not founded on liberty ; another pointed out that man's unpredictability made it impossible to prophesy in this field.

3.1.9. - It seemed evident that literacy is eminently structural in character, and most speakers thought that it could, as a result, be combined with various strategies for social transformation, whether in the form of an accompanying and strengthening factor in a revolutionary process : whether by helping to prepare and facilitate more or less far-reaching socio-economic and socio-cultural changes ; or whether by helping to alter the balance of forces in a changing society ; or even simply by appearing as a factor for the maintenance of the status quo.

3.1.10. - A number of speakers noted that illiteracy was beginning to reappear in several industrial countries ; this phenomenon is affecting underprivileged groups in particular, and would appear to be a consequence of the cultural impoverishment all too often brought about by societies that pay more attention to the needs of passive consumers than to the aspirations of citizens who are conscious of social reality and to those of creators capable of transforming this reality. One participant remarked, in this respect, that, seen thus, all countries are more or less under-developed from the point of view of literacy ; a good many methods devised and now being implemented in the Third World could well be employed in the industrial countries, especially when one bears in mind the phenomenon of the illiteracy backlash. Thus, it would be quite possible to develop concerted action among all peoples and all nations, on a basis of perfect equality, especially where the exchange of information about experience and mutual assistance are concerned.

3.1.11. - It was agreed that literacy work is a determinant factor in the process of social change, even if it remains marginal for the time being ; in the language of economics, it is an instrumental variable, one that should not therefore be seen as an isolated and autonomous activity, but should, on the contrary, be situated in the overall context of the attempt to transform and to develop the human and the natural environment.

3.1.12. - A number of participants drew attention ot the fact that literacy is indissociable from the destiny of each country, and inseparable from the permanent quest for greater social justice. Clearly, it cannot be reduced to a mere question of learning to read and write ; literacy work is concerned with transforming mentalities and with encouraging the awakening of autonomous, critical, constructive minds, capable of changing man's relationship with man and with nature ; in other words, it is concerned with propagating what one participant termed an ideology of hope.

3.1.13. - Several participants stated that the Experimental World Literacy Programme had amounted to a major development-research effort, standing to the credit of the international community ; in their view, it is important that the results of this series of experiments be exploited and published, for example by setting up a data bank and by systematising the exchange of information and teaching materials.

3.1.14. - In the course of the discussion, information was presented concerning literacy campaigns in the People's Republic of China and in North Korea. Several speakers also mentioned the Cuban expriment, as well as the literacy campaigns undertaken in Brazil by the

Brazilian Literacy Movement (MOBRAL) and the Basic Education Movement (MEB).

3.2. - Second theme

Functionalities of literacy, in view of the need to satisfy the essential needs of man in terms of economic activities, health, culture and participation in the reform of society.

3.2.0. - The second theme before the Symposium was discussed in the course of a session chaired by Mr. Paul-Marc Henry (France), in the morning of September 5th. The discussion was based on the following documents, each of which was presented briefly :

— The Functionalities of Literacy Work (SIPA/3), by Malcolm S. Adiseshiah ;

— Literacy Training and Mass Education for Development (SIPA/4), by Samir Amin ;

— Literacy Training, Education and Instruction : Their Aims (SIPA/5), by John Galtung.

3.2.1. - The document SIPA/2, presented previously, was also mentioned by various participants in the course of discussion of this theme.

3.2.2. - Twenty eight participants took part in the discussion, in the course of which an account of the North-Vietnamese literacy campaign was presented.

3.2.3. - Several speakers noted, in the first place, that the notion of functionality had evolved considerably in the course of the period of the Experimental World Programme. As desired by the United Nations Development Programme, this had, to begin with, been associated chiefly with the direct improvement of labour productivity. However, this notion subsequently broadened to encompass other dimensions, particularly insofar as it came to be seen that production-related objectives were inseparable from other objectives concerned with the transformation of economic and social structures. A number of participants agreed that the effectiveness of literacy training — as with that of education in general — depends upon the political and ideological functions it is expected to fulfill, both in the productive set-up and in society as a whole. This effectiveness is naturally diminished in societies that have no human finality, or in Third World countries which, by adopting imported cultural models, confine themselves to imitating these societies devoid of human finality.

3.2.4. - Certain participants suggested drawing a distinction between the two main categories of function : the first, economic in character, concerned with production and with working conditions ; the rest, cultural in character, encouraging the development from primary consciousness to critical consciousness (or the process of « conscientisation ») and the active participation of adults in their own development. A number of speakers emphasized that narrowly economic functions were liable to shore-up the established order in a social system founded on injustice and inequality ; indeed, literacy training may even take on a reactionary character as with education in general, moreover ,if it merely tends to assure the mechanical reproduction of the system of social relations taken as a whole. In line with this way of thinking, others drew a sharp distinction between the notions of development and modernisation, underlining the dangers of an over-brutal rupture or discontinuity with traditional society ; while il

is doubtless necessary to tackle the negative aspects of traditional society in the light of the need to progress beyond it, it should not necessarily be rejected entirely.

3.2.5. - One speaker condemned the present state of chaos engendered, in his view, by the type of educational system adopted, and the development model imported, by a good many non-socialist Third World countries ; the features of this chaos include the dispossession and dequalification of work, excessive specialisation, the sterilisation of inventive and innovative faculties, and increasing dependence upon the outside world. In these countries, this speaker went on, literacy training, and all other forms of education, take the form of a « poor man's luxury », and more closely resemble a sort of conditioning rather than education properly speaking. In these circumstances, literacy training in some ways serves to consolidate the existing division of labour between a privileged minority, invested with the exclusive responsibility for resolving problems, and the majority, which is reduced to merely implementing solutions that have been arrived at without its being consulted. If literacy training is to become truly functional, this dichotomy will have to be eliminated.

3.2.6. - Certain participants pointed out that, in an unjust social system, ignorance and exploitation themselves may well be perfectly functional. One of them went on to say that the ideal — which he termed « heroic » — would be for the whole of society to become a learning society.

3.2.7. - Other participants replied that these views were too idealistic, since no society is perfect ; with the (nowadays theoretical) exception of utterly rigid or stalemated societies, there are always possibilities for improvement and change. They pointed out the need to bear in mind the dialectical nature of all historical processes and the contradictions contained therein. It is rare to find no interstices within social structures, or openings capable of being exploited or infiltrated in order to act as a catalyst, or even to subvert these structures. Doubtless education alone is not enough to bring about a radical change in human society, but that is no reason for rejecting it out of hand. After all, were not the liberators of Latin America — it was pointed out — educated in the traditional schools of colonial society ? Others drew attention to the fact it is hard to conceive of a society that has no finality whatsoever, and that the real problem concerns rather the existence of a multiplicity of finalities that are not necessarily all compatible with each other. Several participants concluded therefore that literacy training should be encouraged under all circumstances, since it can serve as a key capable of opening — however slightly — the door to endogenous development and to the process of self-reliance. Thus seen, literacy training becomes a factor for development in the broadest sense of the term, involving not only growth in output, but also the transformation of social relations ; it is even seen as a factor capable of affecting political power structures themselves in the long run.

3.2.8. - Certain participants took up the paradox suggested in Document SI-PA/5 : what is going to happen the day literacy becomes a worldwide phenomenon ? Nothing, in particular, most likely, if this literacy is purely nominal. On the other hand, decisive changes would certainly occur in the case of an educational project that was implemented on a worldwide scale, concerned to

develop an independent, critical and constructive attitude in men, and geared to developing in them a capacity for transposing ideas into deeds. One participant turned the question on its head and asked what would happen to humanity if it reverted to a state of universal illiteracy : nothing less than the end of civilization, without a doubt.

3.2.9. - Most participants attempted to reexamine the concept of literacy training. Some even went so far as to consider that the term literacy training no longer accorded with the reality it now embraces, and that it would be desirable to agree on a term better suited to the new tendencies, one better able to restore the global significance of a process that is supposed to enable man to participate in the making of his own history ; seen as a reading of the world, and not merely a decoding of words. Thus conceived, literacy training seeks to further the development of the personality as a whole and to stimulate social interaction.

3.2.10. - One participant, referring to an integral language experiment, pointed out that dialogue in itself constitutes a path to literacy, and that it is not essential to be able to master written language in order to be able to carry on a dialogue.

3.2.11. - Several speakers mentioned the role — which some of them thought very positive — of the information media and of audiovisual aids in literacy training. One of them emphasized that these media, nevertheless, only amount to educational aids and should not therefore be allowed to take the place of free dialogue between adults exposed to the teaching-learning process. One participant thought television, in particular, was a one-way system of communication, and that it might therefore turn out to be a mere travesty of dialogue. Several speakers warned of certain dangers arising out of the use of information media where these are in the hands of ruling minorities or foreign interests seeking to use them as instruments of power, manipulation or cultural colonisation. Other insisted that no attempt be made to encourage the use of these media in countries or communities lacking in the technical know-how needed to maintain them or in the financial resources necessary for their replacement.

3.2.12. - One participant suggested that literacy training ought to encourage learners to acquaint themselves with communications techniques, starting with traditional know-how and equipment, and to adapt these to the changing aspirations and social needs of the community. Among other things, this speaker envisaged the use and adaptation of such traditional forms of communication as folk music, lullabies, poetry, woodcuts, ritual symbols and other forms of cultural expression. In this respect, certain contemporary techniques utilising low-cost materials are equally important, such as the preparation of posters, agendas and minutes of meetings ; writing letters ; the organisation of discussion groups, drama groups and music sessions ; the publication of local magazines ; and the preparation of various illustrations.

3.2.13. - One speaker noted that no discussion of the functionality of literacy training could possibly fail to raise the vital questions now facing the world, concerning the definition of the model of production that is to predominate in the years to come. He then went on to say that, in several Third World countries, the very survival of the popu-

lation depended upon an increase in agricultural output, and that functional literacy training could well play a vital role in this.

3.2.14. - Another participant referred, in the course of the discussion, to certain vocational training experiments in the Soviet Union. The Vatican's decision (taken some time ago) to set up a Committee for Human Advancement especially concerned with literacy training questions was also mentioned during the discussion.

3.3. - Third theme

The determination to introduce deep changes in the living conditions of man and in social structures as a sine qua non of literacy undertakings.

3.3.0. - The third theme was discussed in the course of the afternoon session of September 5th, which was also chaired by Mr. Paul-Marc Henry (France). The following introductory documents were presented by their respective authors :

— Functional literacy training and the revolution in education (achievements and the outlook for action) (SIPA/6), by Bouzid Hammiche ;

— Literacy training and revolution : the Vietnamese experience (SIPA/7), by Lê Thành Khôi ;

— ALFIN, an experiment in adult literacy training in a society in transition ; Peru (SIPA/8), by Alfonso E. Lizarzaburu ;

— Literacy training : to read words, or the world ? (SIPA/23), by Mr. M. Rahnema.

3.3.1. - In addition, reports were given, on the one hand, on the literacy training experiment in Somalia and, on the other, on the characteristics of an electronic machine designed to help very young children to learn to read.

3.3.2. - Forty-four participants took part in this discussion, which dealt in greater detail with a certain number of questions raised in the course of the sessions concerned with the first two themes.

3.3.3. - It was agreed unanimously that literacy training is, first and foremost, a political matter and that, consequently, it could not be considered as neutral.

3.3.4. - One participant stated that, in his view, there was no such thing as a politically neutral education, technology or theology. Similarly, another observed that an imported technology was synonymous with alienation and dependence.

3.3.5. While not arguing with the validity of these statements, one participant nevertheless insisted on the Third World's right to free and full access to humanity's scientific and technological heritage. Another suggested that one could draw a distinction between the fact of learning, which might be seen as autonomous, and the learning system, which is always dependent and which, consequently, reflects the contradictions of society as a whole. Yet another pointed out that while there was undoubtedly a political dimension to literacy training, its technical and methodological aspects (for example, curricula preparation techniques) could be considered to be neutral.

3.3.6. - An educational system, it was remarked, is the fruit of the prevailing material conditions and social structures at a given moment in history ; no society has ever devised an educational model *ab initio*, and that all educational systems are, in reality, a means of repro-

ducing the dominant ideology. Several participants drew attention to the fact that the effectiveness of literacy training was undoubtedly dependent upon the existence of socio-political structures that promote creative, autonomous popular participation, and that are capable of encouraging and stimulating the will to liberation of the masses.

3.3.7. - Certain participants even went so far as to state that, especially insofar as it reinforces the objectively reactionary rôle of the petty bourgeoisie, education today constitutes an obstacle to development in a good many Third World countries ; in particular, this class is seen as having contributed to the maintenance of a state of dependence upon imported models of development.

3.3.8. - Other speakers, however, viewed any type of educational action, regardless of the structural context within which it occurs, as tending to strenghten the learners' autonomy of decision and therefore to enhance their capacity for change, and even, some said, their revolutionary potentialities. In the latters' view, literacy training ought to be encouraged if only in order to make sure that existing power structures do not achieve their ends without encountering resistance and criticism. Man has a right to knowledge, moreover, and literacy training is the first step in the long series of efforts required to weaken and destroy the monopoly of knowledge.

3.3.9. - Certain speakers mentioned that, independently of existing socio-political structures, it was possible to make use of non-governmental organisations, such as cooperatives, in developing a mode of literacy training based on the active participation of workers.

3.3.10. - Several speakers made clear the need for an initial political will at State level, before any attempt at popular literacy training and education could be made, this will alone being capable of setting social change in motion. Since it must necessarily adjust to this national political will, international cooperation, in this view, would henceforth play only a marginal rôle, even if it remains technically important and frequently essential from a material viewpoint.

3.3.11. - One speaker observed that any kind of educational action founded on adult participation and conscientisation presupposes a change in the decision-making process in the societies concerned. Another regretted that literacy training is better adjusted to the needs of the nation-State than to those of the grass-roots community, such as the village or factory. One participant drew attention to the bureaucratic control that tends to operate, in a good many countries, with respect to the preparation and supervision of literacy training programmes and to the running of educational projects, which in some cases are used as means of exerting pressure or influence.

3.3.12. - Several participants emphasized the extent and the seriousness of illiteracy among women, bearing in mind in particular the economic rôle they play in traditional societies. In this respect, one of the participants stated that the liberation of women was one of the conditions upon which a genuine liberation of men depended. Certain participants insisted that particular attention be paid to the needs of underprivileged groups (immigrant workers, refugees and generally speaking, all those who are separated from their cultural milieu).

3.3.13. - Some participants pointed out the importance of administrative structures in literacy training, and the need for a multisectorial and interdisciplinary horizontal approach that would combine

and harmonize the thinking and activities of the various ministries and bodies concerned with the advancement and education of man. Several participants also underlined the need for increased interministerial responsibilities in the field of literacy training.

3.3.14. - For several speakers, the really decisive factor in literacy training, in the final analysis, is the awakening of consciousness, for man's purpose and his characteristic quality is to be conscious : in the absence of growing awareness, education becomes mere manipulation. Others pointed out that any form of conscientisation leads to serious difficulties and gives rise to resistance on the part of the technostructure and dominant groups, unless it is possible to raise the level of consciousness of the upper and middle classes at the same time.

3.4. - Fourth theme

Innovative role of literacy experiments in the reform of teaching and training systems and their integration into the global educational process.

3.4.0. - This last theme was the subject of discussion at the session held on September 6th, under the chairmanship of Mr. Ben Mady Cissé (Senegal). The following papers, not all of which had a direct bearing on the main theme of the discussion, were presented by their respective authors :

— Learner-centred innovations in literacy training (SIPA/9), by Helen Callaway ;

— Is adult literacy training neutral ? (SIPA/10), by Paulo Freire ;

— On the way to the learning society (SIPA/11), by Edouard Lizop ;

— Literacy and industrialization. The dispossession of speech (SIPA/12), by E. Verne ;

— Literacy and dialogue between civilizations (SIPA/13), by Roger Garaudy.

3.4.1. - The Symposium also examined a number of other papers and general background documents, a list of which is given in Annex N° 3. Twelve participants took part in the discussion.

3.4.2. - Most of them highlighted the importance, the diversity and the significance of literacy experiments conducted in the course of recent years. Literacy training, which used to be considered all too often as a marginal and neglected sector of education — perhaps because illiteracy was only supposed to constitute a temporary historical phenomenon — has now become a fertile field of research and experiment, from whose results and lessons the entire educational system may now draw inspiration. They pointed out that a number of innovative approaches have been adopted, and that some of these open up interesting prospects for improving the integration of school into society and may be used in defining the conditions for restructuring the school system. This is particularly so with regard to the identification and analysis of the problems confronting learners in everyday life, the solution of which is the very aim of the educational process. This problem-centred approach enables education to remain directly related to reality. This is also the case with respect to the fertile and necessary relationship between theoretical learning and practical training, which should be mutually supportive and enriching. Other participants said that functional literacy should be seen

as part of an attempt to develop a new technological humanism, while one speaker pointed out the convergence of concerns between a kind of literacy training concerned with adults' needs and interests, on the one hand, and what has now come to be called mesological education, on the other.

3.4.3. - A participant stated that what seemed to him to be the principal ideas emerging from the Symposium were, first, that literacy, as with culture, roots each person in the history and the culture of his people by opening him up to the culture of other peoples, and, secondly, that it prepares each person for creative participation in, and for the invention of the future of his own people and that of the community of nations. In order to elucidate the contribution of all peoples and of all cultures to the building of a symphonic — and not hegemonic — civilization of the universal, by initiating a dialogue among civilizations, requires that considerations of culture take precedence over those of economy, and that reflexion concerning ends precede and determine the organisation of means.

3.4.4. - One speaker held that literacy training, and adult education in general, could well stand as an alternative to schooling for children, as a kind of ripost to the economic functions the school no longer fulfills, and as a new way of compensating for the social functions the school has never in fact fulfilled. He added that, despite all the efforts that had been made, adult literacy training remains a means of supplying « underprivileged » groups with a palliative for the schooling they lack.

3.4.5. - Various speakers drew attention to the vital contribution non-formal education in general, and literacy training in particular, could make to formal education, notably with respect to the active participation of the learner in the conception and actual process of his own education ; as well as the indispensable modification of existing hierarchic relationships in formal education, the establishment of constant two-way communication between teachers and taught, and the necessary simultaneity of the functions of teaching and learning for all people, whatever their age, their degree of knowledge and the diversity of their experience.

3.4.6. - Several participants noted that any coherent solution to the literacy problem presupposes an approach that integrates formal and non-formal education into a global educational system, one that is coextensive with the duration of human life, that is integrated into the needs of society and capable of permanent adjustment and review. Others pointed out that literacy is just the first step, a moment in a permanent process of education. In their view, it ought to stimulate the transition towards a learning society founded on the primacy of participation, on collective advancement, on the recognition of imaginative and creative faculties, and ought to educate men to be responsible for themselves and, through solidarity, reponsible for others.

3.4.7. - Finally, one participant drew attention to the interest shown by the World Health Organisation in the use of functional literacy techniques, with a view to developing and improving health education and, generally speaking, in order to enhance the effectiveness of campaigns aimed at improving the health and welfare of individuals and groups, in rural areas especially.

4. - Drafting and approval of the Declaration of Persepolis

4.1. - Drafting Committee

4.1.0. - A Drafting Committee was created to prepare the text which was to become the Declaration of Persepolis through which the Symposium would express its point of view on the main themes debated ; this Committee was placed under the chairmanship of the Rapporteur General, Mr. Baron Castro, and with the following persons who were appointed *ex officio :*

a) The Moderators of the plenary meetings ;

b) the Secretary General ;

c) the Executive Secretary ; and

d) the Assistant Rapporteur.

4.1.1. - With a view to avoiding formal procedures as much as possible, all the participants desirous of contributing to the preparation of the draft of the Declaration of Persepolis were invited to join with the *ex officio* participants.

4.1.2. - The Draft Committee decided to take up the main ideas expressed during the plenary sessions as a basis for the establishment of the first draft which would be submitted to the plenary meeting of the participants.

4.2. - First draft of the declaration

4.2.0. - The Drafting Committee began its work on the 5th of September ; its first meeting lasted from 3.30 p.m. to 8.20 p.m. The eight persons appointed *ex officio* were joined by Messrs. Deléon (Yugoslavia), Garaudy (France) and Lizarzaburu (Peru). Mr. Garaudy was appointed Editor of the first draft ; he carried out his very difficult and complex work with outstanding competence and a remarkable sense of discipline. The discussions of the Committee took place in French, which was the common language of the majority of its members, although on some occasions it was necessary to use short translations in other languages with a view to clarify certain concepts.

4.2.1. - The first text, which was established by the end of the first meeting of the Drafting Committee, was discussed during its second meeting, which took place on the same day from 10.30 p.m. to 3 a.m. of the following day. A first draft of the Declaration of Persepolis was thus produced in French and immediately translated into the other two working languages and distributed among the participants.

4.2.2. - During the plenary meeting of the morning of the 6th of September, under the direction of Mr. J.R. Kidd, Canada the first draft was presented by the Rapporteur General ; most members of the Symposium took part in the very broad ensuing debate, during which the structure and broad lines of the text were generally agreed upon and a number of amendements were proposed. The participants were invited by the Moderator to put in writing the oral amendements which would be examined in detail and taken into due consideration by the Drafting Committee in establishing the final draft of the Declaration.

4.3. - The draft of the declaration

4.3.0. - On September 7, from 4.30 p.m. to 6.15 p.m., the Drafting Committee met for the third and last time under the chairmanship of its Rapporteur General, Mr. Baron Castro and with the participation of the Moderators, Messrs. Henry (France) and Prieto Morales (Cuba), the Secretary General, Mr. Rahnema (Iran), the Executive Secretary, Mr. Bataille (France), the Editor, Mr. Garaudy (France), the Assistant Rapporteur, Mr. Henquet (France) and Messrs. Deléon (Yugoslavia), Hammiche (Algeria) and Lizarzaburu (Peru).

4.3.1. - As instructed, the Committee thus prepared the final draft of the Declaration of Persepolis which was reproduced in the three working languages and distributed among the participants.

4.3.2. - During the last plenary meeting, on September 8, with Mr. Kidd (Canada) acting as Moderator, the draft was approved by general consensus, after a few proposals bearing on the wording had been made ; the incorporation of these into the final version was entrusted to the Rapporteur General, in cooperation with the Assistant Rapporteur and the Executive Secretary, who were to ensure that the three versions of the text matched.

4.4. - Closing session

4.4.0. - In the main hall of the Darius Hotel and under the chairmanship of H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi, in the presence of the Deputy Director-General of Unesco, Mr. John E. Fobes, of several members of the Iranian Government and other persons of ministerial level, Her Imperial Highness opened the meeting ; she gave the floor to the Rapporteur General, Mr. Baron Castro, who read out in Spanish the text of the Declaration of Persepolis which was greeted by strong and prolonged applause. This text is to be found as Annex N° 4 of this report.

4.4.1. - H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi then made her closing speech. (Annex 5). With this ceremony, which was both simple and solemn, the International Symposium for Literacy came to an end. Thanks to the spirit of mutual understanding which presided over its work, distinguished people coming from different regions and adhering to often very widely divergent ideologies, were able to seek and find points of agreement on the main aspects of the serious problem of illeteracy as it exists today throughout the world.

4.5. - The Declaration of Persepolis presented to H.I.M. the Shahinshah of Iran

4.5.0. - The International Symposium for Literacy having been organized, with the cooperation of Unesco, following a proposal of the Government of Iran, H.I.M. the Shahinshah gave a private audience at the Palace of Saabad, on 10 September, to a group of persons representing the Symposium. Members of this group, who handed over the text of the Declaration to His Imperial Majesty, were the following :

— H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi, President ;

— Mr. John E. Fobes, Deputy Director-General of Unesco ;

— H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Baron Castro, Rapporteur General ;
— H.E. Mr. Majid Rahnema, Secretary General ;
— Mr. Léon Bataille, Executive Secretary ;
— Mr. Paul-Marc Henry, Moderator of several plenary meetings ; and
— Mr. Roger Garaudy, Editor of the Drafting Committee.

4.5.1. - His Imperial Majesty commented at length with the members of the Group on the possible consequences and on the proceedings of the Symposium as well as on the text of the Declaration of Persepolis. It seems appropriate to recall here the mention made of the Symposium by the Shahinshah of Iran in the message he addressed to his country on 8 September, on the occasion of International Literacy Day. The following paragraph is extracted from this message :

« The record of the last decade evidences both successes and shortcomings in the struggle against illiteracy. On the one hand, the percentage of adult illiterates in the population of our planet has declined. On the other hand, because of high birth rates, the absolute number of adult illiterates has increased. We direct the National Committee, in cooperation with national and international agencies, to seek effective ways and means for resolving this problem. In this respect, full and careful consideration should be accorded to the recommendations of the International Symposium for Literacy which has just concluded in Persepolis. »

These words show eloquently the important contribution of the Persepolis meeting to the elaboration of solutions to the problem of illiteracy in the countries where its negative influence is still felt today.

4.5.2. - The members of the Group expressed to His Imperial Majesty the gratitude of the participants towards the Iranian authorities for their efficient contribution to the organization and to the proceedings of the Symposium and towards all national and local Iranian authorities and people for the constant care and warm kindness they extended to all participants.

NOTE. -- The text of the present Report has been established by the Rapporteur General, H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Baron Castro, by the Assistant Rapporteur, Mr. Pierre Henquet and by the Executive Secretary, Mr. Leon Bataille, on the basis of the notes they took and after comparing their respective drafts.

5. - Annexes

N° 1 - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

N° 2 - OPENING SPEECH BY H.I.H. PRINCESS ASHRAF PAHLAVI

N° 3 - WORKING DOCUMENTS

N° 4 - DECLARATION OF PERSEPOLIS

N° 5 - CLOSING SPEECH OF H.I.H. PRINCESS ASHRAF PAHLAVI

List of Participants

NAME	TITLE	COUNTRY
H.I.H. Princess Ashraf PAHLAVI, President		
ABTAHI, Morteza	Ministry of Labour, Iran	Iran
ABUCAR, A. M.	President, Board of Supreme Revolutionary Council, Somalia	Somalia
ABYAN, I. M.	Director-General of Higher Education and Culture, Somalia	Somalia
ADHIKARY, Poorna	Imperial Organization for Social Services, Iran	Nepal
ADISESHIAH, Malcolm	Director, Madras Institute of Development Studies, India	India
AFKHAMI, Gholam	Secretary General, National Committee for World Literacy Programme, Iran	Iran
AHY AYMAN, Lily	National Committee for World Literacy Programme, Iran	Iran
AHI-KHAZAI, Touran	Literacy Corps for Women, Iran	Iran
AHMED, Manzoor	Associate Director, Educational Strategy Studies, ICED, Essex, U.S.A.	Bangladesh
AMIN, A. A.	Ministry of Education, Somalia	Somalia
AMIN, Samir	Director, African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, Dakar, Senegal	Egypt

23

NAME	TITLE	COUNTRY
ARDALAN, Fereydoun	Iranian National Commission for Unesco	Iran
ARENAS, Cecilia Obregón de	Chief, Adult Education Division, Ministry of Education, Colombia	Colombia
BAHMAN BEIGHI, Mohammad	Director-General, Office for Tribal Education, Shiraz, Iran	Iran
BARON CASTRO, Rodolfo	Rapporteur General Secretary General, Office of Iberoamerican Education, Madrid	El Salvador
BATAILLE, Leon	Executive Secretary	France
BIRJANDI, A.	Literacy Corps, Iran	Iran
BREWSTER, Beverly	Observer, International Federation of Library Associations	U.S.A.
CALLAWAY, Helen	Member of Somerville College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom	U.S.A.
CANDAU, Marcos	Secretaria de Asistencia Social MPAS, Brazil	Brazil
CHANG, Chung-Li	Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China	China
CHARIFI, Ahmad-Houchang	Minister of Education, Iran	Iran
CHASSEMI, Ahmao	National Committee for World Literacy Programme, Iran	Iran
CISSE, Ben Mady	Secretary of State for Human Promotion, Senegal	Senegal
CORREA, Arlindo	President MOBRAL (Brazilian Literacy Teaching Movement), Brazil	Brazil

24

NAME	TITLE	COUNTRY
DELEON, Asher	Adviser to the Minister of Education and Social Welfare, India	Yugoslavia
DUARTE, Luciano	MEB (Basic Education Movement), Brazil	Brazil
EKRAMI, Abbas	Pars College of Education, Teheran, Iran	Iran
EL FASI, Mohammed	President, Coordination Centre for Arab National Commissions for Unesco, Rabat, Morocco	Morocco
FARYAR, Abdollah	National Committee for World Literacy Programme, Iran	Iran
FATTAHIPOUR, A.	Director, National Centre for Adult Education and Training (INCADET), Iran	Iran
FERRER, Raul	Vice-Minister of Adult Education (MINED), Cuba	Cuba
FILONOV, Georgij N.	Institute of General Problems of Children's Upbringing, USSR	USSR
FREIRE, Paulo	Office of Education, World Council of Churches, Geneva	Brazil
GALTUNG, Johan	Chair in Conflict, and Peace Research, Oslo University, Norway	Norway
GARAUDY, Roger	Author	France
GUTIERREZ PEREZ, Francisco	School of Education, National University Heredia, Costa Rica	Costa Rica
HAMMICHE, Bouzid	Director General of Studies and Programmes, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Algeria	Algeria

25

NAME	TITLE	COUNTRY
HENQUET, Pierre	Literacy Division, Unesco	France
HENRY, Paul-Marc	Director, Development Centre, O.E.C.D.	France
HERMOSILLA CIVICO, L.	Office of Iberoamerican Education	Argentina
HOMAYOUNPOUR, P.	National Committee for World Literacy Programme, Iran	Iran
HO, Jong Suk	Member of People's Assembly, North Korea	North Korea
HO, Truc	Member of Parliament, Hanoi, Vietnam	Vietnam
HOSSEINI, Ghafar	National Plan Organization, Iran	Iran
HSIAO, Ching-Jo	Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China	China
IBUKA, Masaru	Hon. Chairman of the Board, Sony Corporation, Tokyo, Japan	Japan
ISANI, Usman Ali	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Pakistan	Pakistan
JOHANSSON, Egil	Department of Education, University of Umea, Sweden	Sweden
KAMALI, Charles	President, CEDECOS, Kigali, Rwanda	Rwanda
KARAMOUSE, Hosseine	Director of Education, Literacy Corps, Iran	Iran
KIDD, James Robbins	Secretary General, International Council for Adult Education	Canada
LE THANH KHOI	Institute of Education, University of Paris V, France	Vietnam
LI, Chu Wol	Union of Democratic Women, Pyongyang, North Korea	North Korea

26

NAME	TITLE	COUNTRY
LIZARZABURU, Alfonso	Journalist, educator	Peru
LIZOP, Edouard	Director, C.O.D.I.A.M., Paris, France	France
LUWSANDENDEV, A.	Institute of Language and Literacy, Mongolia	Mongolia
MAROUN, Ignace (Mgr)	Observer for the Vatican	Lebanon
MESHKATI, Mehran	Observer, UNICEF	Iran
MOAREFI, Akbar	Observer, World Health Organization, Geneva	Iran
MPOGOLO, Z.J.	Tanzania UNDP/Unesco Literacy Project, Mwanza	Tanzania
NGUYEN, Ngoc Chao	Ministry of Education, Hanoi, Vietnam	Vietnam
PIRLOT, P. F.	Observer, International Labour Office	Belgium
POLEO MARTIN, Felix	Executive Secretary « Convenio Andrés Bello », Bogota-Colombia	Venezuela
PRIETO MORALES, Abel	Director General, Technical Pedagogical Services, Ministry of Education, Cuba	Cuba
RAHNEMA, Hamid	Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Iran before Unesco	Iran
RAHNEMA, Majid	Secretary General, President of the Programme and External Affairs Commission of Unesco Executive Board	Iran
RYAN, John	Director, International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, Teheran, Iran	U.S.A.
SABER, El Din	Director ARLO, Cairo, A.R.E.	Sudan

NAME	*TITLE*	*COUNTRY*
SADRI, Kh.	Ministry of Cooperation and Rural Affairs	Iran
SAYAHI, A.	National Committee for World Literacy Programme	Iran
SHAIKH, A.U.	Director, Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Training, Poona, India	India
SOLER ROCA, Miguel	Director, Literacy Division, Unesco	Uruguay
VERNE, Etienne	Director, Journal « Orientations », Paris, France	France

Opening address by Her Imperial Highness Princess Ashraf Pahlavi

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen :

On behalf of my brother, His Imperial Majesty the Shanshah, of the Government of Iran, of the Sponsoring Committee of the Symposium, and in my personal capacity, I bid you welcome to Persepolis. It is with profound pleasure that I see gathered here at our invitation men and women from all parts of the world — from China to Sweden, from New Zealand to Zambia — to exchange with complete frankness and without any of the formalities which impede so many international gatherings their thoughts, their experiences and their hopes on the subject of the struggle against illiteracy.

It is precisely because of the diversity and deph of your views, of the richness of your experiences and the generosity of your hopes that you have been called to participate in this International Symposium for Literacy which I shall shortly have the honour to declare open.

I wish in particular to note the presence among you of eminent individuals from Vietnam, North Korea and the People's Republic of China. This is, if I am not mistaken, the first international meeting dedicated to literacy that has profitted from your valuable participation. I will not conceal that I consider your participation as an historic event rich in future promise : we have at last arrived at universal participation in this struggle against illiteracy which affects, in one way or another, all of humanity.

Permit me also to stress the importance I attach to the presence among us of representatives of the United Nations family, and in particular to that of the Director of the Literacy Division, Mr. Soler-Roca, who represents the Director-General of Unesco. We are greatly encouraged by the knowledge that the cause we have met to discuss has enjoyed and will continue to enjoy the support of the international community.

I must, however, express my regret at the inability of several individuals, upon whose participation I had counted, to join us at this Symposium. In particular, Mr. Rene Maheu, former Director-General of Unesco and a member of our Sponsoring Committee who has, upon the orders of his physician, been forced to absent himself from our gathering. You may perhaps wish to send him a message of sympathy and regret.

The timing of this meeting I think particularly opportune. First, because it marks the 10th Anniversary of the Teheran Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, which Unesco convened in September 1965 upon the invitation of His Imperial Majesty. Secondly, because the present hour marks the emergence of a new world order, to which education of the masses is an essential corollary, a propelling force and a permanent objective.

It is evident that the world has greatly changed during this past decade. The Third World no longer exists only as a potentiality, but has discovered its identity, defined its objectives, asserted its rights, put into question the inherited ideas from past eras and established a new moral order. As is evident here, this fundamental re-appraisal is not the exclusive privilege of men and women from the Third World. Nor, does it exclude — I am pleased to note — the fields of education in general or literacy in particular.

We must, therefore, reconsider problems, which it may have seemed were settled once and for all, and answer some fundamental questions, while seeking to avoid falling into unrealistic speculations.

We must first direct our attention to the past. I fear that we shall find the achievements of the last decade dramatically insufficient and quite frankly disappointing. And yet, the numerous programmes inaugurated during this period — the most successful of which have been the object of high praise — the studies which have been made and the international and regional meetings which have been held on this subject, witness an evolution of concepts and practices in the field of literacy.

As an example, I would cite the Iberian-American Symposium at Popayan, Colombia in 1973 organized by the Iberian-American Bureau of Education at the invitation of our friend, His Excellency Mr. Rodolfo Baron-Castro. The Declaration of Popayan, the text of which is at your disposal, constitutes an important statement to which you may wish to refer.

Here in Iran, just days ago, His Imperial Majesty proclaimed his intention to greatly accelerate progress towards the eradication of illiteracy. He anxiously awaits the results of your deliberations before taking decisions to this end. This increases the burden of your responsibility as the hopes of my fellow citizens are linked to your decisions. Furthermore, the experts whom I have directed to draw up suggestions as to the most adequate ways and means for developing intensive educational programmes, oriented to the fulfillment of the essential needs of the men and women of this country, will derive valuable insight and inspiration from your reflections.

Two retrospective documents have been prepared by the Unesco Secretariat to assist us in assessing the developments of the past ten years. For this assistance, I wish to thank the Director-General of that Organization, Mr. A.M. M'Bow. On the basis of the lessons which can be drawn from past experience we can

approach the themes which the Sponsoring Committee has placed before us. These topics are excellently presented — each in its own way — by the authors of the working documents which shall constitute the framework for our discussions.

It would not be appropriate for me, at this introductory point, to draw conclusions from the readings of the Symposium texts. But it is necessary to establish clear priorities regarding the objectives we are seeking. To my eyes, the highest priority should be accorded to the problem of illiteracy among women. Not only because women constitute the majority of illiterates and because the number of women illiterates is increasing more rapidly than illiterate men, but also because literacy can be a powerful means for their emancipation. You are certainly aware of the Declaration of Mexico which accords to this question the importance it deserves. We would not want to fail, especially during International Women's Year, to emphasize this fundamental aspect of the problem to which we should earnestly seek a solution.

I have one more remark before I finish. While we would not underestimate the technical aspects of literacy, we must realize that it is not only a technical problem but essentially a political problem, in the largest and most noble sense of the term. It is from this perspective, it seems to me, that we must examine the problem if we truly wish to make progress.

I therefore invite you, in the manner of the authors whose texts you have examined, to express your deepest thoughts, without euphemisms or restrictions, on the issues before us. It is from such an exchange that the outlines of a policy may emerge — for the diffusion, promotion and implementation of literacy — and for the promotion of a more happy and just world for peoples and for man.

As I do not wish to anticipate your discussion, it remains for me only to invite you to begin your work. I declare open this International Symposium for Literacy.

Working Documents

Theme 1 - Balance and teachings of ten years of literacy work

SIPA/1	- Literacy in the world since the 1965 Teheran Conference : Shortcomings, achievements, tendencies (Document prepared by the Unesco Secretariat)	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/2	- Experimental World Literacy Programme Report and Synthesis of Evaluation (Document prepared by the Unesco Secretariat)	Eng. Fr. Sp.

Theme 2 - Functionalities of literacy

SIPA/3	- Functionalities of literacy by Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/4	- Literacy training and mass education for development, by Samir Amin	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/5	- Literacy, education and schooling - For what ? by Johan Galtung	Eng. Fr. Sp.

Theme 3 - Changes in the living conditions and in the social structures as a requisite of literacy undertakings

SIPA/6	- Functional literacy and the educational revolution (Work accomplished and prospects for further action) by Bouzid Hammiche	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/7	- Literacy training and revolution : The Vietnamese experience, by Lê Thành Khôi	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/8	- ALFIN, An Experiment in adult literacy training in a society in transition : Peru by Alfonso E. Lizarzaburu	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/23	- Literacy : For reading the word or the world ? by Majid Rahnema	Eng. Fr. Sp.

Theme 4 - Innovative role of literacy experiments and their integration into the global educational process

SIPA/9	- Learner-centred innovations in literacy work, by Helen Callaway	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/10	- Are adult literacy programmes neutral ? by Paulo Freire	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/11	- On the way to the learning society by E. Lizop	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/12	- Literacy and industrialization - The dispossession of speech, by E. Verne	Eng. Fr. Sp.
SIPA/13	- Literacy and the dialogue between civilizations, by Roger Garaudy	Eng. Fr. Sp.

Other documents

SIPA/14	- On literacy strategy for rural development, by Manzoor Ahmed	English
SIPA/15	- Libraries as a force in cultural change by H.C. Campbell	English
SIPA/16	- El lenguage total en Costa Rica by Francisco Gutiérrez	Spanish
SIPA/17	- Report on the activities of the Arab Literacy and Adult Education Organization (ARLO)	English
SIPA/18	- World Health Organization and Adult Literacy, by Dr. A. Moarefi	English
SIPA/19	- Labor desarrollada por la Oficina de Educación Iberoamericana (OEI) en el campo de la alfabetización (1964-1974)	Spanish
SIPA/20	- Second chance for the second decade (Some considerations about literacy and basic education in the second half of the Second Development Decade), by J.R. Kidd	English
SIPA/21	- Informational note on the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods	Eng. Fr. Sp.

SIPA/22 -	The Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and Nadezhda K. Krupskaya Prizes for Meritorius Work in Literacy, by the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods	Eng. Fr.
SIPA/24 -	Declaration of Popayan	Eng. Fr. Sp. & Portuguese
SIPA/25 -	La campagne d'alphabétisation (Cuba) par Abel Prieto Morales	Fr.

34

Declaration of Persepolis

The number of illiterates is constantly growing.

This reflects the failure of development policies that are indifferent to man and to the satisfaction of his basic needs.

In spite of the progress made in some countries as a result of far-reaching social changes, there are close to one thousand million illiterates in the world, and many more under-nourished people.

In many cases, moreover, even people who have become literate have not yet acquired to a sufficient degree the means of becoming aware of the problems of the societies in which they live and of their own problems, nor the means of solving them or of playing a real part in their solution.

There is even a tendency to a decline in literacy in the industrialized countries.

Successes were achieved when literacy was linked to meeting man's fundamental requirements, ranging from his immediate vital needs to effective participation in social change.

Successes were achieved when literacy programmes were not restricted to learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, and when they did not subordinate literacy to the short-term needs of growth unconcerned with man.

Tribute should be paid to those mass campaigns that have already brought about the complete or almost complete eradication of illiteracy in certain countries and to regional or more limited experiments, which have helped to prepare innovative methods with regard to the programming, means and organization of literacy activities linked to development aims. These experiments, and in particular functional literacy programmes and projects, have made a valuable contribution to the common stock of practical methods in the field of literacy and basic education. Greater use should be made of them in future efforts.

The International Symposium for Literacy, meeting in Persepolis from 3-8 September 1975, in unanimously adopting this Declaration, considered literacy to be not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Thus

conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims ; it also stimulates initiative and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and of defining the aims of an authentic human development. It should open the way to a mastery of techniques and human relations. Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right.

It is true that all social structures give rise to the type of education which can maintain and reproduce them, and that the purposes of education are subordinated to the purposes of the dominant groups ; but it would be incorrect to conclude that there is nothing to be done within the existing system.

Literacy, like education in general, is not the driving force of historical change. It is not the only means of liberation but it is an essential instrument for all social change.

Literacy work, like education in general, is a political act. It is not neutral, for the act of revealing social reality in order to transform it, or of concealing it in order to preserve it, is political.

Consequently, there are economic, social, political and administrative structures that favour the accomplishment of literacy projects, others that hinder them. The most favourable structures would be:

— Those that, from the political point of view, tend to bring about the effective participation of every citizen in decision-making at all levels of social life: in economics, politics and culture.

— Those that, from the economic point of view, aim at an endogenous and harmonious development of society, and not at blind and dependent growth.

— Those that, from the social point of view, do not result in making education a class privilege and a means of reproducing established hierarchies and orders.

— Those that, from the professional point of view, provide communities with genuine control over the technologies they wish to use.

— Those that, from the institutional point of view, favour a concerted approach and permanent co-operation among the authorities responsible for basic services (agriculture, welfare, health, family planning, etc.).

Experience has shown that literacy can bring about the alienation of the individual by integrating him in an order established without his consent. It can integrate him, without his participation, in a foreign development model or, on the contrary, help to expand his critical awareness and creative imagination, thereby enabling every man to participate, as a responsible agent, in all the decisions affecting his destiny.

The success of literacy efforts is closely connected with national political will. Ways exist of attaining the objectives which result from the definition of literacy on which the Symposium based its work.

The ways and means of literacy activities should be founded on the specific characteristics of the environment, personality and identity of each people. True education must be rooted in the culture and civilization of each people, aware of its unique contribution to universal culture and open to a fertile dialogue with other civilizations.

Literacy is effective to the extent that the people to whom it is addressed, in particular women and the least privileged groups (such as migrant workers), feel the need for it in order to meet their most essential requirements, in particular the need to take part in the decisions of the community to which they belong.

Literacy is therefore inseparable from participation, which is at once its purpose and its condition. The illiterate should not be the object but the subject of the process whereby he becomes literate. A far-reaching mobilization of human resources implies the commitment of literacy students and teachers alike. The latter should not form a specialized and permanent professional body, but should be recruited as close as possible to the masses undergoing literacy training and should belong to the same or to a related social and professional group in order to make dialogue easier.

The effectiveness of this mobilization will be increased if greater respect is paid to the initiative of the populations concerned and to consultation with them, instead of abiding by bureaucratic decisions imposed from outside and above. The motivation of those involved will be stronger if each community is itself given the opportunity of carrying out the literacy project.

The methods and material means should be diversified, flexible and suited to the environment and needs of the new literates, as opposed to a uniform and rigid model

Literacy work of this kind would constitute the first stage of basic education designed to bring about the individual development of men and women through continuing training and to improve the environment as a whole. It would permit the development of non-formal education for the benefit of all those who are excluded by the present system or are unable to take advantage of it. Finally, it will imply a radical reform of the structures of the education system as a whole.

The importance of audio-visual aids for literacy was fully recognized. However attempts to take over these aids on grounds of technical necessity by economic or political forces beyond the control of the peoples concerned, and their use as instruments of cultural colonization, should be rejected. Uses of audio-visual aids that would hinder active participation and human dialogue should be banned. Programmes should be drawn up in consultation with those concerned, through an exchange of information on significant experiences.

Literacy work should encourage the participants to acquire a wide range of communication skills.

The accomplishment of these tasks calls for a priority claim on national and local financial and human resources. In certain situations, the appeal of countries for complementary international financial co-operation supplied, *inter alia*, by international and regional institutions, may be justified in the light of special needs, particularly with regard to equipment and to the training of personnel. The use of complicated equipment which the recipient community could not fully control should not be encouraged, and such assistance should under no circumstances be allowed to influence national policies.

Literacy work is of world-wide concern, requiring that ideological, geographical and economic distinctions be transcended.

While its primary field of operation is in the Third World, the new international order gives it a universal dimension, through which the concrete solidarity of nations and the common destiny of man must find expression.

Closing Speech

by Her Imperial Highness

Princess Ashraf Pahlavi

Excellencies, ladies, gentlemen, friends,

I want very much to tell you that my absence from this room during the last few days was only a physical absence, as I was kept informed day after day about the development of your work which, as you well know, I consider of utmost significance.

I feel that this meeting has been exemplary not only because of the number, the quality and the diversity of its participants, but also by the character, I should say by the style of your discussions.

Indeed, as far as their substance is concerned, one can say without fear of exaggeration that never before has the study of the problem of illiteracy been undertaken from such diversified points of view and experience and from such deep consideration. As far as the style of your work, you were wise enough to substitute true, passionate and fascinating discussions to the technique of long reports, that is to say of the monologue. And here is the result : this Declaration of Persepolis which we have adopted a moment ago and which, I hope, will be carried to all corners of the world. Its main virtue, it seems to me, is to be a call to action at governmental, institutional and grassroot levels, an action seeking its inspiration from thinking and experience and ceaselessly enriching both.

May I thank you heartily and congratulate you for it.

I feel sure that the links of friendship which were created or strengthened during these days of tireless work will overcome both distance and time, that you will remain in close contact with one another and with us with a view to furthering the work you have done here, and that you will return to your respective countries with new energies and fortified hopes.

My own hope is that the Symposium of Persepolis will have served significantly the cause of literacy in the service of man, in all his dimensions, which is the very purpose of functional literacy taken in its broadest sense. If such were the case I would feel deeply satisfied.

I declare closed the International Symposium for Literacy, and to all of you I say Bon voyage.